

# Quick Conversation Guide on *Pediatric COVID-19 Vaccination*

Now that COVID-19 vaccination is available for everyone ages 5 years and older, parents may have questions for you. Hearing your answers to their questions can help parents feel more confident vaccinating their children and teens.

**It's important to tell parents that you recommend COVID-19 vaccination for children ages 5 years and older to give them the most powerful protection we have against this disease.**

## Importance of Vaccination

### Why does my child need to be vaccinated?

COVID-19 can be serious in children. Vaccination can help protect them from getting COVID-19 and help keep them from getting seriously sick if they do get infected. Vaccination can also help protect siblings who are not eligible for vaccination and other vulnerable family members. Vaccination can help keep kids in school and help them safely participate in sports, playdates, and other group activities.

## Severity of COVID-19 Infection

### COVID-19 isn't even really serious for kids, is it?

COVID-19 can make children very sick. Some children with COVID-19 need to be hospitalized and some children have died. Children can also develop serious complications like [multisystem inflammatory syndrome \(MIS-C\)](#) —a condition where different body parts become inflamed, including the heart, lungs, kidneys, brain, skin, eyes, or gastrointestinal organs. And some children can develop [post-COVID complications](#) (also called long-COVID).

## Safety

### Is it safe for my children to get vaccinated against COVID-19?

Scientists have conducted clinical trials with thousands of children, and the results show that the vaccine is safe and effective. In the clinical trials, no serious safety concerns were identified and the side effects that were reported were mild, didn't last long, and similar to those experienced after routine vaccines. The safety of COVID-19 vaccine continues to be monitored.

You can help efforts to monitor the safety of the vaccine by enrolling your children in [v-safe](#), a free, smartphone-based tool that uses text messaging and web surveys to check-in after vaccination.

### Is the vaccine safe for children with allergies?

CDC recommends that people get vaccinated even if they have allergies to food, pets, insects, venom, pollen, dust, latex, and oral medicines. The vaccine does not contain eggs, preservatives, latex, or metals. However, if your child has a history of an allergic reaction to PEG (polyethylene glycol), they should not get the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.

## Potential Side Effects

### What are the vaccine side effects?

[Side effects](#) in children may include a sore arm, tiredness, headache, muscle pain, nausea, and fever. These are normal signs that their body is building protection and should go away in a few days. Some children don't have any side effects.

### What should I do if my child has side effects after vaccination?

If your child has a fever or achiness after vaccination, you can give them a non-aspirin pain reliever like acetaminophen or ibuprofen to help them feel better. If they have pain at the injection site, placing a clean, cool washcloth on the area can help. It is not recommended that you give pain relievers before vaccination to prevent side effects. In general, aspirin is **not recommended** for use in children and adolescents less than 18 years of age.

### What is the risk of myocarditis or pericarditis?

Reports of [heart inflammation](#) in adolescents and young adults are rare. We don't yet know what the risk will be in younger children, but scientists are continuing to monitor this. Most adolescents who have developed this condition after vaccination have responded well to medicine and rest and felt better quickly.

## Vaccine Development Process

### How were the vaccines developed so quickly?

Scientists have been working for many years to develop vaccines against viruses like the one that causes COVID-19. Any COVID-19 vaccine that is available for children has gone through the same approval process that is required for other vaccines – including [routine childhood vaccines](#). None of the clinical trial steps were skipped and no corners were cut when it comes to safety.

## Vaccine Product

### Which COVID-19 vaccine will my child get?

The [Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine](#) is currently the only vaccine that [children ages 5 through 17 years](#) can get. The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for children ages 5 through 11 years has the same active ingredients as the vaccine given to adults and adolescents. However, the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine that is given to adults and adolescents **cannot** be used for children ages 5 through 11 years. The vaccine for children comes in a different vial with a different color cap to make it clear which vaccine is for children ages 5 through 11 years and which is for people 12 years and older.

### What is the difference between the dose for my child and the dose for adults?

Unlike many medications, COVID-19 vaccine dosage does not vary by patient weight but by age on the day of vaccination. Children ages 5 through 11 years get an age-appropriate dose. Just like for adolescents and adults, children ages 5 through 11 years will receive 2 doses of the vaccine three weeks apart.

### Can my child get the COVID-19 vaccine at the same time as other vaccines?

Yes, COVID-19 vaccines can safely be given at the same time as other vaccines, including flu vaccine.